

your foot. All your apology for yourself and all your abuse of the course-ness of the preacher will not atone for you in the eyes of the people. We are not all fools. We can see when our eyes are open. If anything said, fits so close that it hurts and you must say something, let it be an humble confession of your sins. Otherwise keep still. You will only advertise your own folly.

5. Never mind a fault in the other fellow. If he don't squeal, he shows his good sense; and he will not thank you for wasting any of your maudlin sentiment upon him. There are always those who are saying, "I don't care for plain preaching myself. I rather like it. But I am so afraid that brother or sister so and so will get offended and never come back to church again." No the way to do is not to whine for yourself, nor for any other; but to keep mum, and convince everybody that the preacher was barking up the wrong tree. By your good works and "your chaste conversation coupled with fear," prove to the preacher that he was beating the air and making a spectacle of himself before the world.

THE SNAKE IN THE BUNDLE OF STICKS.

Acts xxviii, 3, 5.

Paul was now a prisoner on his way to Rome. He had taken an appeal, or appealed his case to Cæsar.

And when he was before Agrippa, and Festus, and had presented his case and made that noble defense that caused Agrippa to exclaim, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian," they consult together and conclude that Paul might have been set at liberty had he not appealed to Cæsar. Shortly after this he was given in charge of a Centurion, who with other prisoners was to be taken to Rome. They were taken aboard a vessel perhaps in the month of September at least in the beginning of winter, the season of frequent storms. Their journey was slow on account of making so many landings and encountering high winds. While along the coast of Crete, they are overtaken by a severe storm, and driven upon an island; the vessel is so damaged that they are in

great danger of being lost. But Paul tells them, they shall all be saved but the vessel will be lost. They leave the vessel and reach the shore, some on boards, and some on pieces of the ship; they reach the Island, Melita, in a rain-storm. The natives show them great kindness, and they build a fire to make it more comfortable for them; and Paul, always ready to lend a helping hand, gathers a bundle of sticks and places them upon the fire, and there came out of the heat or rather from the bundle of sticks a viper, which fastens itself upon his hand. When the natives saw this and knowing Paul to be a prisoner, they conclude that he is a murderer, and though he has escaped the sea, Justice was following him, and vengeance was reaching him on the Island.

But Paul shook the beast from his hand, and did not seem to suffer any harm. This astonished the natives. As they expected to see him fall dead suddenly. And the man that they had a few moments before looked upon as a murderer, they now think a God.

The serpent was a very poisonous one, and its sting or bite was fatal in ordinary cases. Paul knew not when he was gathering the sticks that it was concealed there until it fastened itself upon his hand.

THE HIDDEN SERPENT.

Now my friends we have in this fair land of ours a serpent that is hidden, that is concealed and whose awful power we know nothing of until we are wrapt in its coils; until its fangs are fastened,—not on our hands,—not only in the body, but fastened upon the soul that serpent, that unsightly beast, that demon of the lower regions, is strong drink.

ITS TERRITORY.

There is no evil that occupies as much territory as strong drink; its territory is the civilized world; it is a sad fact, that it reaches nations with civilizations, this agent of Satan reaches heathen nations with the Gospel. Four missionaries reach Africa as ministers of the Gospel, sent from this Christian nation to show them the way of salvation, and with them has arrived forty thousand gallons of whiskey to destroy men, soul and body. These noble missionaries were very much

grieved when they learned of this soul destroying evil that had arrived with them. It reaches all classes of society the high and low, rich and poor; it reaches the halls of congress, and slays its victim; it goes to the home of the family, poverty stricken and finds its victim there.

There is no evil that brings want and misery into so many homes. What fills our court records with divorce cases? *Strong drink*. It fees more lawyers, employs more police, erects more jails and penitentiaries, fills more alms-houses, and furnishes more victims for the scaffold than any other evil of our land.

Look at that young man as he stands upon the scaffold, and looks out upon the scenes of this life before taking that awful leap into the eternal world he speaks of his crime, and with the hot tears streaming down his flushed cheeks, he says: *Rum did it*. Go with me to yonder prison, and there behind those bars—deprived of liberty and home comforts is some mother's boy,—a criminal, a murderer, a disgrace to the mother who gave him an existence you ask the thousands there, what has brought them here; their answer is *Rum did it*. Rum brought me here.

Why is there always with a temperance lesson by way of illustration a serpent in the glass. It is because of the poison there, because of its deceiving nature and character, its power to kill and destroy.

THE POISON CONCEALED.

I want to say to you young man that Paul knew not that the serpent was in the bundle of sticks, so you may think as you are asked to take the first drink, that there is nothing wrong in it; it can do me no harm to taste it. Ah, I want to tell you that the serpent is in the sticks;—the serpent is in the glass, and you may by the *first glass* be so bitten by it, be so poisoned by it as to destroy a grand character, a noble body, reach a disgraceful end, fill a drunkards grave, and your soul an awful hell, where mercy could never reach you.

I want to say that there is nothing more disgusting, nothing more brutish than an intoxicated man; he is something I cannot endure, and as the young man sees his companion as he